

Washington State Patrol Media Release

Chief Lowell M. Porter



Captain Fred Fakkema
Government and Media Relations
(360) 753-5299 – office
(360) 753-5469 – fax
<http://www.wsp.wa.gov>

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Contact: Ms. Christine Fox
Phone: (360) 753-3697
equipment@wsp.wa.gov

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“Traction Devices for Winter Driving”

Tires with metal studs imbedded may be used beginning November 1, provided they are removed by April 1.

Other approved traction devices are outlined in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 204-22 which states in part, “(1) Link type tire chains consist of at least two chain loops, one on each side of the tire, connected by evenly-spaced metal cross chains across the tire tread. . . .ladder-type cable tire chain assemblies that have been manufactured in accordance with the standards of the Tire & Rim Association, Inc.; 3200 West Market Street; Akron, Ohio 44313. . . .Cable tire chains described in this specification shall be of the following types as specified for regular restricted clearances: (a) passenger car (b) Single light truck (c) Heavy truck (d) Special police and emergency vehicle . . .”

Specifications for approved traction tires include, a minimum of 4/32 inch tread; relatively aggressive tread pattern; on at least one side of the tread design, the shoulder lugs protrude at least ½ inch in a direction perpendicular to the direction of travel; permanently labeled on at least one sidewall with the words “mud and snow” or any combination using the letters “M” and “S” (WAC 204-24-040).

The use of tire chains and other traction devices is outlined in WAC 204-24-050, which states in part, “(1) Vehicles under 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight. When traffic control signs are posted by the department of transportation it shall be unlawful for any vehicle to enter the controlled area without having mounted on its drive tires the traction device specified by the sign, . . . Exception for all wheel drive vehicles. When “chains required” signs are posted, all-wheel drive vehicles shall be exempt from the chain requirement when all wheels are in gear and are equipped with approved traction devices as specified in WAC 204-24-040 provided that tire chains for at least one set of drive tires are carried in the vehicle.

(2) Vehicles or combinations of vehicles over 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR). When traffic control signs marked “chains required” are posted by the department of transportation it shall be unlawful for any vehicle or combination of vehicles to enter the controlled area without having mounted on its tires, tire chains as follows: . . .” An outline of where chains are to be mounted on vehicles or combinations of vehicles over 10,000 pounds GVWR may be found at www.wsp.wa.gov under commercial vehicles.